NMT Case I

U.S.A. v. Karl Brandt et al./ The Doctors' Trial

Summary

The Medical Case, U.S.A. vs. Karl Brandt, et al. (also known as the Doctors' Trial), was prosecuted in three 4¾ months' terms that dockets and administrations accused of organizing and participating in war crimes and crimes against humanity in the form of medical experiments and mass murder performed in the concentration camps.

Karl Brandt, the lead defendant, was the senior medical official of the German government during World War II. After defendants were indicted in October 1946, the trial commenced in December 1946 and lasted until July 1947. Two indictments on four counts: 1. conspiracy to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity; 2. war crimes; 3. crimes against persons protected by the laws of war, such as murder, torture, and mutilation; and 4. membership in criminal organizations (declared by the laws of war), and 4. membership in criminal organizations (SS).

The specific crimes charged included more than twelve series of medical experiments concerning the effects of and treatments for: mustard gas, lewisite, phosgene, sea water, poison gas, sulfonamides, bone, muscle, and nerve regeneration, bone transplantation, saltwater consumption, epidemic jaundice, sterilization, typhus, poisons, and incendiary bombs.

These experiments were conducted on concentration camp inmates. Other crimes involved the killing of Jews for anatomical research, the killing of euthanasia victims, and the euthanasia of sick and disabled children in Germany and occupied territories. The indictments charged that the defendants participated in the implementation of the Nazi racial policies in the occupied territories. The fourth count concerned membership in the SS (Schutzstaffel) of the Nazi regime.

Of the 23 defendants who were indicted, 20 were arraigned on October 25, 1946, and convicted; nine defendants were convicted and sentenced to terms in prisons, and seven defendants were acquitted.

The trial commenced on December 9, 1946, and ended on August 20, 1947. Presiding over the trial was Chief Justice Walter Beals of the state of Washington. Prosecuting the case was Telford Taylor, Brigadier General, U.S. Army, Chief Counsel for War Crimes. Assisting Taylor were Brigadier General James McHaney, Brigadier General A. Frank Reel, Colonel Charles Dwork, Colonel Morris Ellis, Jr., Colonel Sidney Alderman, Commander Harold Sheeran, Lieutenant Commander Walter Rapaport, and Lieutenant Commander Jean Harris.

Defendants and other "medicals" chosen to testify in the trial were: Karl Gebhardt, Siegfried Handloser, Oskar Schröder, Paul Rostock, Hermann Becker-Freyseng, Wolfram Sievers, Rudolf Brandt, Georg August Weltz, Adolf Pokorny, Hans Wolfgang Romberg, Hans Eisele, Hans Bütow, Hans Lolling, Fritz Fischer, Helmut Poppendick, Gerhard Rose, Joachim Mrugowsky, Herta Oberheuser, Gerhard Schiedlausky, Fritz Ehrhardt, Viktor Brack, Waldemar Hoven, Kurt Blome, Rudolf Mentzel, Oswald Pohl, Georg Konrad Morgen, Hermann Pfannenstiel, Otto Hebold, Konrad Meyer-Hetling, Siegfried Ruff, Ernst Robert Grawitz, Konrad Schäfer, Ernst-Günther Schenck, Karl Genzken, Karl Brandt, Hellmuth Unger, Karl Oberg, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Werner Heyde, Paul Nitsche, Herbert Lindenberger, Friedrich Mennecke, Curt Pannwitz, Otto Rasche, Otto Thierack, Leonardo Conti, Hans Lammers, Philipp Bouhler, Franz Blaha, Franz Stangl, Christian Wirth, Franz Reichleitner, Hans Hefelmann, Werner Blankenburg, Hans Joachim Sewering, Hans Heinrich Lammers, Hans Joachim Pelger